

EDITORIAL

The publication of this second issue for 2002 completes our commission as editors of the journal for now. Once again we were faced with the daunting prospect of selecting from a substantial number of papers submitted (21 in total) and we hope that the papers that we have chosen, in consultation with our referees, will be both interesting and useful. As was the case with the previous issue, we have been fortunate in having a panel of eminent people from various countries to referee the papers in addition to the many staff of the Faculty of Design Architecture and Building at UTS who assisted in the refereeing process.

In reviewing the contributions and selecting papers for publication we were faced with some fundamental questions, not the least of which was the question of exactly what criteria we would use in assessing papers. It may seem simple: separate the “good” papers from the “bad” papers (the “wheat” from the “chaff”) and print the former. There are, however, some other concerns that need to be addressed before we even get to the point of thinking about what constitutes a “good” or “bad” paper. The most important of these is related to the nature of the journal itself: it is a refereed journal but one that serves two professional bodies, the AIB and the AIQS, and therefore we should give consideration to presenting papers that will be of interest to their members, and not only to academics. On the other hand, as both bodies have their own professional journals, in which practitioner papers and articles regularly appear, we have generally steered away from papers that we feel fall into that category.

In assessing papers for publication we have always looked for those that have a clear objective and that then investigate or pursue that objective in a clear and logical manner. In keeping with our aim of publishing papers that will be of some interest to all our readers we have also looked for clarity in the writing and reporting of research outcomes. It is unfortunate that often what is good research (in our opinion and that of our referees) is devalued because the reporting of it is unclear or just simply difficult to read. The end result is a paper with content that makes it worthy of publication but an outcome that is, overall, too muddled for anyone but a dedicated editor, or perhaps another researcher, to plough through.

It could be argued that writing papers for refereed journals is all about content and not about style, i.e., that it is the research and the conclusions drawn from the research that are important. Further it may be argued that it is not the purpose of serious research to produce light reading matter, however, construction is a practical business and if the people in the professions that serve the industry are to benefit from research then surely the research outcomes need to be communicated to those who may make use of them—otherwise what purpose does the research serve apart from looking good on academic resumes?

This is not to say that we have rejected more than half of the papers submitted because we thought they were poorly written—several were very well written but were basically literature reviews that will eventually form part of a thesis for the authors’ postgraduate degrees. Others did not clearly follow their stated objectives; a few were just not original enough or rigorous enough to displace papers that did report original research well. In any case we have tried to be fair and consistent, or at least fairly consistent.

Our thanks must again go to the Editorial Board plus the UTS referees who willingly donated their time and expertise, the contributors who accepted our decisions and suggestions with good grace, and Sally Beech, who has done her usual professional job of putting the issue into printable format.

Producing the 2002 issues of the journal has been a challenging but edifying job, and we wish our colleagues at RMIT every success with Volume 3.

Rick Best

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December 2002